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Following Mothers to the Wet Market: The significant benefits gain by young generations

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Abstract

Fewer youngsters are seen in the wet markets with their mothers to purchase raw materials. This study attempts to identify and rectify the quality that youngsters may increase when following their mothers. An ethnographic method was employed based on live observation and description on a people's way of life at various wet markets prior to 2013 Eid Adha's celebration. The findings showed knowledge transmissions, ability to differentiate quality in products, opportunity to understand the selection diversity of products, confidence and comfortable to purchase raw materials. The confidence gain by youngsters ensures the continuation of knowledge transfer to the coming generations.

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1. Introduction

The traditional market, is comprised of wet markets, night markets or farmer's markets which are favored by consumers when purchasing fresh food. According to Trappey and Lai (1997), the traditional market is defined as a market with little central control, lack of refrigeration, and does not process fresh food into branded goods for sale. Meanwhile, according to Goldman et al. (1999), he describes wet market is typically a group of small vendors, specialized in one fresh food line as meat, fruits, vegetables,

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or fish otherwise in a sub-line (fruits and vegetables). Wet market is usually located adjacent to housing area with a high population density. In the traditional markets, the retailers are able to fulfill the consumer's specific needs such as when the consumers are requesting a specific size, quantity and quality.

During feast celebration, the number of youngster seen in the traditional market especially wet market seems to decrease in the number compared to previous time. This scenario can be seen may be due to many factors, for example, living separate from parents, time constraints and less awareness on the importance of going to the wet market with mothers. It is necessary to preserve the spending time of youngsters with their parents, as there are many significance gains when accompanying their mother.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Knowledge transfer

Based on Davenport et al. (1998) said that knowledge is information combined with experience, perspective, analysis and reflection. The knowledge that being transmitted in this research based from Fleck's table (1997) is cultural knowledge in the context of recipe knowledge that is knowledge on prescriptions for action (Van Zyl 2007). Transferring knowledge is necessary preserving cultural knowledge on skill and technique of preparation traditional foods (Nor et al. 2012). By transmitting knowledge to the next generation, it can retain and sustain for the future generation the practices (Nor et al. 2012). The transmission must have visible and involvement of the participants (Spencer and Wales 1999).

Knowledge transfer can be build based on encouragement, constructive comment, openness, mutual trust, respect and willingness to learn and dissemination (Spencer and Wales 1999). The crucial medium of cultural knowledge transmissions are observing, hands on learning, recipe readings, and practices (Sharif et al. 2013). Adaptation is the key that enabled people to understand other persons's skills, knowledge and experience (Sharif et al. 2013). This approach makes the person become more familiarize and adjust to the new knowledge gain that will influence them to practice and utilize it (Sharif et al. 2013). Knowledge adaptation is an evolutionary process by which an individual either remain, modified or altered to fit in to the current trend and demand (Sharif et al. 2013). The transmission of Malay cultural knowledge within Malay ethnic generation does happen most commonly between mother and daughter. The common medium of knowledge transfer practices by Malay ethnic families are observation, be an assistant, receive instruction and task. The challenges during transmission of cultural knowledge is weakening of the old generation to the past down the knowledge to the young generation. Besides that, other challenges that can be state are the commercialization of ingredients, convenience food product available and lifestyles development can reduced the traditional practice which leads to the reduced of the amount of knowledge transferred (Sharif et al. 2013)

2.2. Youngsters

Youngsters are general term use to describe the young people, but formally, they are known as youth. According to UNESCO, youth is a fluid category, since it marks the transition stage of childhood dependence towards adulthood independence that varies among cultures. However since age is the easiest way to define a group, UN has defined the age set to be between the ages of 15 to 24 years. One of the factors that affect youngsters is the time span it takes to prepare for adulthood. The age set for youth might be differed based on the time span in preparing for adulthood. Besides the age, youth is also affected by the environment they are raised in, the degree of exposure to certain risks and to certain risks

and related stigma, sex- dependent, socio- cultural context, economic circumstances and also marital status.

Youth trend is dynamic and change over time and has varied enormously when compares to childhood stage. If previously the socialization agents for children are families and religion, now the role of social media, mass media teacher and colleague are more prominent. In terms of health, the trend of having a sedentary lifestyle has also increases. Challenge faced by youngsters nowadays may come from many sources such as the current social transformations which make them more competence in adapting the evolution of skills and knowledge to match with the speed of growing demands. Another challenge is to cope with growing ageing population which means the communication barrier will increase. It is imperative that the communication has to be relevant and consistent with their forms of interaction. Besides, there is also a constant balance between keeping tradition and progress ahead.

2.3. Wet Market

A wet market is generally an open food market. People already familiar shopping at the wet market, where the floor may routinely be sprayed and washed with water that gave it the name "wet market." The main functions of the market have been associated with selling of live animals out in the open. The collection may include poultry, fish, and meats. Fresh fruits and vegetables are also available. Wet markets usually include fish markets and butcher shops, which are in a separate area with the fruits and vegetables stalls. In the past, people usually go to the wet market where they get needs before they familiar with the supermarkets. At the market, sellers can make a living feed the family, social community has been established, and a sense of belonging to the community can be found.

Unfortunately, markets in some cases have also become associated with the spread of a number of emerging diseases. WHO began the promotion of Healthy Food Markets as an approach for promoting food safety and related environmental health issues. (WHO, 2006) Nowadays, government hygiene policies have changed many markets to operate in the building. Starting in the 1990s, many wet markets have switched places into the hygiene buildings area. The 2000s, wet market was facing new challenges of urban renewal projects in many areas. There is a controversial discussion on the preservation of the wet market, whereby the risk of the wet market is entirely replaced by a supermarket or online-shopping. Today, urban renewal process has been ongoing, and the collective memory of the wet market is under high pressure to disappear.

2.4. Food Market

Food market is defined as a marketplace where groceries are sold. In addition, the grocery store also included a meat market. It specializes in retailing fresh products, therefore, offers greater diversity of fresh products. Indeed, social relations are defined and maintained through food. It's a place where shopping for raw materials takes place. Shopping can bring different meaning to different people whereby it is merely a simple sequential action of "take, pay and go".

However, if being looks deeper, it is symbolically meaningful. It communicates a critical social function- weaving and maintaining social relations. Food markets provide a medium for social interaction, ultimately fostering a solid networking and presenting a sense of community. There is a complex web of social relations. Besides, a warm relationship is somehow at a deeper level than the friendly one. For instance, it is a place whereby it provides a seller-buyer relationship to occur. In fact, there are different levels of social relations. Seller-buyer relationship is the most obvious one. Besides, it is intimately linked to the provision of customer service. As for family relationships, family members are drawn closer in doing shopping together. This is because conversation is initiated primarily surrounding

purchase decisions. Apart from family relationships, friendships and neighbourhood constitute another aspect of communal belonging that can be obtained from household shopping. In fact, household shopping has become a family activity which is often done during weekends or holidays.

2.5. Festive Celebration

According to Getz (2010), festivals have been defined by Falassi (1987), in the classical cultural-anthropological view as “a sacred or profane time of celebration, marked by special observances.” Festivals celebrate community values, ideologies, identity and continuity. Getz (2005), defined them as “themed, public celebrations”. Pieper (1965) believed only religious rituals and celebrations could be called festivals. Festival is an important and inseparable part of culture and functions for transmitting cultural elements in its own ways. From the view of folklore, sociology and cultural anthropology, festival is regarded as a folk record and interpretation of cultural elements and the actual image of the abstract history. Festival is the recognition and maintenance of the established civilization and the medium and tool of cultural transmission and inheritance and exerts its influence in a given society (Wu & Cao, 2011).

Traditional festivals were the misunderstanding in Vietnam during the war and in the middle of the last century. They were accused as waste of time, money and affect country's production because people thought the festival means of entertainment. Moreover, when traditional festivals went along with religious ritual, they were considered part of feudalism, which needed removing. People have a very sophisticated ritual to symbolize unity in the region or spiritual meaning it might have. For that festival, there were many challenges because it is very sophisticated, it requires a lot of time to practice. It is not only for enjoyment because it has a meaning. So generation after generation, people have developed how to pray to the God or how to perform on the temples and pagodas. In this modern era, it became complicated for younger generations to take over because they do not have enough time to practice. So the ritual quality becomes lower and lower.

3. Methodology

An ethnographic method was employed in this study. Ethnography is defined as the practice of anthropological research based on live observation and description on a people's way of life. On the other hand, it is defined as the study and systematic recording of human cultures in order to produce a descriptive work from such research. Besides, ethnography method was used where the intent is to provide a detailed, as well as an in-depth description of everyday life and practice. The surrounding or the study was observed from the point of view of the subject that means in this study, the participants acted as the subjects. Furthermore, there are two major types of ethnographic study that are being applied in this research that are observations and photos taking. The observations made and followed by picture taking that were applied in this research were used in order to tap on the real experience of following mothers to the wet market. Participant observations were made from an engagement in the field setting or place where the ethnography takes place. This is one of the primary sources of ethnographic data.

Moreover, through close exploration of various sources of data an ethnographic understanding can be developed and thus, these data sources become the foundation of this research. Picture taking was used to enable the snaps of photos be used as evidence for reporting and analysis. Data collections were made by taking notes from observations and also from the pictures taken. Additionally, written materials were complementary as well, whereby detailed written notes were the mainstay of fieldwork. Application of this methods helps to make all the data became useful and hence able to become a story in order to identify and rectify the importance that youngsters may gain when following their mothers to the wet

market, especially during the feast celebration. Observations were made at many wet markets in Selangor, Malacca, Kuala Lumpur and Terengganu prior to 2013 Eid Adha's celebration. The festival is an occasion for feasting or celebration, especially a day or time of religious significance that recurs at regular intervals. Furthermore, it is remarkable to note that as Islam is synonymous with Malays, nearly all of it festival celebration are connected with religious doctrine.

At the first glance, purchasing ingredients for the cooking process at the wet market is merely a straightforward chronological act of grab, pay and go. However, on closer and thorough observation, it is symbolically important. The observation was emphasized on the younger generation participation in the preparation process of the Malay traditional food or formerly known as ethnic food for the festive celebration. Ethnic foods are defined as the foods that became a habit, tradition as well as practice in a specific ethnic group who communities recognized and become a command practice from generation to next generations. The study sample was made up of four Malay families. Malays are known as an ethnic group of Austronesia population where they were mostly inhabiting the Malay Peninsula, counting the southernmost parts of Thailand, the east coast of Sumatera, the coast of Borneo, and the minor island which recline between these locations. The respondents consist of four daughters along with their mothers whereby they had practice the act of going to the various wet market to purchase ingredients needed for the preparation and the cooking process especially during the festive celebration. Other than that, it is a preparation that has been considered as a crucial part before cooking process is done.

4. Findings

4.1. Knowledge transmissions



Fig. 1. Scenario of transfer of knowledge from one generation to another younger generation in wet market

Fig. 1. shows the visitors are more commonly mothers and were accompanied by their daughter. Good knowledge and skills transmission requires visible and support involvement. Knowledge sharing culture based upon encouragement, constructive comments, openness, mutual trust, respect and a willingness to learn and share (Spencer and Wales 1999). It can occur in the form of mentoring from one generation to another generation. For example, we can see from the above pictures of mentoring process between mothers and their daughter. Mentoring is a relationship which gives people the opportunity to share their

professional and personal skills and experiences, and to grow and develop in the process (Spencer and Wales 1999). It is a one-to-one relationship between a more experienced and less experienced individual (Spencer and Wales 1999). For example, the mentoring process from the first generation to second generation, it clearly shows in term of gaining skills and experiences in buying and choosing the best quality and quantity of cooking goods. This is because of the open and honest communication between parents and their children's. Besides that the respectful and thrusting feeling between family members, also make the knowledge transfer as easy as ABC. This could be an excellent opportunity to learn the skills in purchasing raw materials. For example, when buying raw fish the top criteria to buy them is to make sure the freshness by touching the flesh and it should spring back and the flesh of fresh fish should always be firm and it should adhere firmly to the bone (Stradley 2004).

4.2. A selection diversity of products



Fig. 2. Scenario in wet market with variety selection of ingredients

Fig. 2. shows the general environment in a traditional wet market, in local Malay community, it shows that wettest markets consist of variety food items which mean more options. There are several stalls that sell fresh meat and chicken, fruits and vegetables and convenience food ingredients like fresh coconut milk, cooking paste and frozen foods (Chamhuri et al. 2013). Goldman et al. (1999) said that Traditional markets were viewed as 'fresh food supermarkets', providing one-stop shopping for a large variety of fresh food (Chamhuri et al. 2013). Such facilities available make the mothers practice traditional Malay dish conveniently. More options of food item make the consumers have the power to choose the best stall to purchase the goods. Consumer can visit another stall as there are plenty of other stalls to choose from if they cannot bargain the item to an acceptable price. As we can see, most consumers have not abandoned traditional wet markets when purchasing fresh meat due to several attraction factors such as, the meat is of good quality and Halal guaranteed, and the ability to choose fresh meat (Chamhuri, Batt et al. 2013).

4.3. Differentiate quality in products

Fig. 3. shows the scenario of identifying and buying good quality of products or raw ingredients at the wet market. The benefits that youngsters might get from this activity are they can increase the arts and best methods of selecting quality of raw ingredients. The quality of products can be identified based on various aspects which are the appearance, odour and flavour, texture, defects and blemishes, packaging, size and weight. Different ingredient has a different way on how to identify its quality whether it is good or not. Besides, freshness is also the most important quality factor when buying raw ingredients. Freshness means how much the raw ingredients will be spoiled when placed in wet conditions in a set time. For example, as fish spoils, its smell, taste, appearance and feel go through characteristic can be recognized. The wet market usually sold the raw materials that are fresh from the farm. So, it would not have a problem to choose the fresh materials.



Fig. 3. Scenario of purchasing good quality of raw ingredients at the wet market

There is also different grades of raw materials can be obtained at the wet market. People can choose to buy the raw materials that have a good grade because there are many different retailers who sold different grades of products. By following their mother, they may gain knowledge on differentiating the quality and freshness of raw materials such as fish, chicken and meat. From the Figure 3 above clearly showed that mothers teach their daughter on how to choose a good quality of raw materials.

4.4. Confidence and comfortable to purchase raw materials

Fig. 4. demonstrate three situations that show how the youngsters are getting comfortable at choosing and picking raw products by themselves. The photo (top left): i. shows how the girl is trying to choose fruits from the selection of array fruits stalls; ii. shows how the girl, without her mother supervision tries to determine the freshness of the green vegetables and lemon grass. As for the third photo, it shows how a girl has gained a skill from her mother on how to identify a good quality orange from the others, which is by sniffing on the scented aroma the oranges produced.

All the above photos explain that all the three girls have already become familiar with the activity at the wet market. Its indicated that, by spending time, youngsters are able to make several observations and gain hands-on experiences directly from their mother. The repetition of the processes will result in

gaining confidence to use and practices the knowledge and skills they attain in buying raw materials by their selves. Therefore, on the long run, with regular and impeccable exposure, accompanying mothers to the wet market can nurture the youngsters to become familiar and empowered with all the processes involving buying raw materials at the wet markets. The confidence gain by youngsters, however, is the most important aspect that is stressed above all the benefits since it ensures the continuation of knowledge transfer to the next generations.

5. Discussion

From the observations, food knowledge transfer can occur spontaneously without intention. Hence, with support and motivation interest can be developed by youngsters to acquire and practice the knowledge and skills for buying ingredients at wet market. With visible and support involvement, therefore, can help youngsters to gain knowledge and skills which can occur in the form of mentoring from one generation to another generation.

Next, in terms of variety, there are various stalls that sell a variety of ingredients needed for the cooking process. In other word, these facilities make youngsters and mothers feel convenient to shop for the ingredients. Furthermore, by following mother to the wet market, youngsters may gain knowledge on differentiating the quality of products at the wet market as the wet market usually sells fresh materials. In terms of economic survival, cost can be managed wisely due to the fact of raw materials at the wet market have much more reasonable and affordable price compared to any other stores. Mothers are usually very expert in bargaining. Moreover, this skill can be passed down to their children through negotiation. In other words, by buying the raw materials at the wet market cost is no longer become an issue in buying.

Besides, by following mothers to the wet market, youngsters can spend some quality time with their mother and, therefore, improving their relationship. The gap in their relationship has been minimized as they continuously interact with one another. Lastly, confidence will be gained by youngsters when they repeatedly practice the knowledge and skills that they attained from mothers while buying ingredients. Hence, they become empowered in handling the steps in buying raw materials at the wet markets. Indeed, this precious empowerment has been stressed to ensure the continuation of knowledge transmission to the next generations.

6. Conclusion

In conclusion, going to wet markets especially during the festive season, can bring a lot of significant benefits to youngsters. Both in the short term and long term going to wet markets will develop their skills and knowledge practically in the area regarding raw products such as options, availability and seasonal products. Its eventually plays a key factor in determining the sustainability of the particular skills can be passed down for future generations. Its indeed can only happen through the process of knowledge transfer from mothers to the youngster who combines several techniques such as mentoring, and encouragement. Even though social and technological progress has lead to the emergence of convenient hypermarket, the presence of the wet market is still being sought after since it gives chances for consumers to have a variety of options while providing the best price based on consumer's satisfaction.

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